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OMER L. RAINS

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SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

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Senate

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April 10, 1978

SB 1731 -- SUMMARY

On March 14 of this year, in conjunction with Sunrae, the California Solar Housing and Retrofit Program, Cal SHARP, was introduced.

The measure, SB 1731, is a five-year program in which funds are channeled through the Department of Housing and Community Development to encourage the solarization of state assisted housing for low and moderate income households. The funds, $5 million per year for five years commencing with the 1979-80 fiscal year, are available in the form of both loans and grants. They can be used to finance that portion of the development and modification cost of the design, construction, material expense, and installation of solar systems over that necessary for space heating and cooling or water heating in housing of traditional design.

SB 1731 establishes a set of guidelines for the Department of Housing and Community Development to follow in implementing the measure. Emphasis is upon those projects which finance both solar water heating and solar space heating and cooling systems. Priority is also given to those systems which incorporate passive techniques in the design of the housing unit. The bulk of the funds are earmarked for new, multi-family housing projects, with rehabilitated multi-family units and single family dwellings following. The intent here is to insure that the benefits of the program, and hence of lower utility costs, are passed on to lower income persons.

This week the bill passed its first hurdle in the Senate Public Utilities, Transit, and Energy Committee. It is now pending before the Senate Finance Committee, where it will most likely be taken up in early May. Letters of support to your local Senator and Assemblyman would bolster the chances of Cal SHARP's passage.

Senator Rains believes that it is the responsibility of government to actively encourage the further development and use of solar energy, as well as other non-fossil fuel alternatives. Also, the benefits of solar energy should be available to all economic classes, not simply upper-middle or upper income citizens. Solar is also an excellent tool with which to encourage small business development and further employment. The California Solar Housing and Retrofit Program takes a great stride toward fulfilling this goal.

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